

the
choir with
no name

IMPACT REPORT 2019



"When I'm at choir, I have somewhere I can belong. It doesn't matter about your background, whether it's homelessness, addiction, depression – everyone has been through similar things. It's just one big family."

Rose, Liverpool Choir Member

Introduction

The Choir with No Name runs choirs for homeless and marginalised people in London, Birmingham, Liverpool and Brighton. Our mission is to enable as many vulnerable people as possible to beat loneliness and build their confidence and skills through singing.

We run weekly choir rehearsals followed by a hot meal all year round, offer regular and exciting performance opportunities and run outreach singing workshops in our choir cities for people at risk of homelessness. We support our members to make friends, learn new life skills, improve their mental health, confidence and wellbeing. They then find themselves in a better position to tackle life's wider issues such as securing housing, enrolling in recovery programmes or finding a job. Whether they have been homeless, have a mental health problem or are otherwise struggling, we provide a safe, positive and supportive environment in which to sing away their worries, have fun and flourish as individuals.

Having a regular social activity throughout the year can be a vital anchor for members' whose lives are often chaotic. For some it is the only opportunity they have to socialise in a friendly, non-judgmental space and the only time they get to eat with others. That weekly rehearsal can be the reason to stay sober or a reason to get out of the hostel. Being in choir also provides members with a sense of belonging - a vital human need in order to feel able to cope with the challenges life throws at you. Engaging in choir can be the catalyst for someone making positive strides towards sustainable change in their lives and we are proud to see those changes in our members every week.

"Choir has given me hope. It's a reason to live, a reason to continue. When I was in my deepest depression, the choir was the only thing that kept my mind going. It is a lifeline." Lou, London Choir Member



Our work in numbers... >>>

1,085

Total no. of homeless & marginalised people we reached in 2018/19

474

No. of people we welcomed to rehearsals at our 4 choirs in 4 cities

611

No. of people reached through our workshops and community projects

26

No. of workshops and community projects we have delivered

51

No. of gigs performed by our choirs across the UK

14,000

Total audience members for our gigs

7

No. of individuals & organisations who received our advice and consultation on how to start a choir for vulnerable people

82

No. of amazing volunteers supporting our members at rehearsals and gigs



It was a very good year

Happy Together

In 2017 we made the decision to adapt our choirs into a more sustainable partnership model. Our merged London choir, run in partnership with Look Ahead Care & Support launched in April 2018 and is now 70+ members strong. Having a partner like Look Ahead provides us with sector expertise and direct access to their support services. We are very happy to be working with Look Ahead and are excited about what we can achieve together in London over the coming years.

We were also excited to open the doors of Choir with No Name Brighton in Sept 2018 in partnership with Brighton Housing Trust. The choir was an immediate success, and nine months in it already welcomes over 30 members to rehearsals each week. We knew Brighton was the right place for a choir - a city with a strong focus on community and arts and a significant homelessness problem. Combined with a really engaged partner in BHT and absolutely the right staff recruited to the project, we are confident CWNN Brighton will continue to grow, reach more vulnerable people and host some fantastic events!

One of the key benefits of our partnership model is being able to offer members direct referrals to homeless sector services, utilising our partners' existing relationships and expertise, meaning members can access enhanced support and advice for issues such as housing, addiction, benefits, mental health and employment. This is not something we were able to provide previously and is a vital addition to our service offer. Since our partnership choirs launched, our choir managers in Brighton and London have made 71 referrals for 28 individuals, the most common referrals being made to housing support services and employability programmes.



Don't Stop The Music

Performing at a wide variety of venues to appreciative audiences across the UK is the highlight of choir for members, volunteers and staff alike. Our performances are uplifting, life affirming and inclusive - and (literally!) shine a light on members who show the world what they are capable of achieving. Performing to a rapturous audience and being part of something they can be proud of can restore a sense of self-worth that is so often lost in people who've experienced homelessness. This year we performed in exciting and aspirational venues such as our Christmas singalongs at Brighton Dome and Cadogan Hall, the Community Spirit festival at Birmingham Symphony Hall, and CWNN Brighton's launch gig at the iconic i360.

It is equally important for members to feel they are giving something back to their communities and we enjoyed performing at local support services including SIFA Fireside in Birmingham, The Whitechapel Centre in Liverpool and St Martins In the Fields commemoration service for those who have died homeless in London - an annual performance that means a lot to our members.

Reach Out

We delivered 29 outreach singing workshops reaching 611 individuals at a range of services including those for mental health, addiction, refugees and women's groups. Our outreach singing workshops are a brilliant way to introduce our choirs to people who may benefit from our service, and a chance to experience first-hand the many benefits of singing together. Our member ambassadors come along to workshops to support participants and tell them about choir. Attending that first choir rehearsal is a lot less daunting when there are some familiar faces in the room. Our Birmingham Choir Director and Choir Manager also spread our influence further afield and ran workshops with a community music project in Munich by invitation of Munich Arts Council.

We have offered consultancy and advice to seven organisations wanting to set up a choir for vulnerable groups. Of these, we've developed a more involved consultation relationship with CAIS in Wrexham and ScotsCare in London. With our support and resources, they have set up their own choirs for vulnerable and/or homeless people. We have formalised these relationships and named their choirs 'Members of the CWNN family' as a way to acknowledge our involvement and share our brand as a stamp of quality within the sector. It's an effective way for us to share our expertise with other organisations and feed into our mission to enable as many homeless and marginalised people as possible to beat loneliness and build their confidence and skills through singing.



This is Me...

2018 saw the Choir with No Name turn 10 years old – a very exciting milestone for us all – and we wanted to mark our birthday by recording a single and performing it live at our 10th anniversary Big Christmas Singalong in December 2018. We chose the track This Is Me (from The Greatest Showman) as it is about celebrating differences and not being ashamed of who you are - a message that really struck a chord with our members.

In January, all four choirs went into professional studios across the country to record the single and video, which will be released to coincide with World Homelessness Day in October 2019. It was brilliant to be able to offer members the opportunity to sing in a professional studio and experience the recording process first hand, as well as the excitement of being filmed by a professional film crew. They looked, sounded and felt like rock stars!

"An incredible experience that eclipses being homeless and jobless. This has increased my self-confidence. It is a sign of things to come - I will be back on my feet!"

Sandra, London Choir Member



I've Got News For You...

We received some great press and media coverage in 2018/19, reaching a potential public audience of over 15 million, thanks largely to our amazing member ambassadors who shared their stories eloquently and fearlessly.

Highlights include a fantastic video feature for the Liverpool Echo featuring some really powerful stories from Liverpool choir members, some brilliant BBC coverage of our Birmingham choir and member ambassadors for Red Nose Day 2019 and our London choir performing with pop star and radio DJ Fleur East for her Christmas day radio show on BBC Radio 5 Live.

We were also very proud of our CEO and Founder, Marie, who was included in the Sunday Times Alternative Rich List 2018, which highlights people who are striving to make the world a better place through their work. The accompanying video filmed at a London rehearsal was fantastic, and a real testament to Marie's incredible hard work and vision over the past decade

"Choir to me means friendships with good people, who we treat like humans beings."

Steve, Liverpool Choir Member



Future Plans...

It may come as no surprise that we have big plans for 2019/20 - we've always been a small charity with big ambitions after all! We will be developing a new community choir model to allow individuals and organisations in more remote parts of the country to set up a CWNN choir for homeless and marginalised people. This is a new area of work for us, and we are excited to develop what we feel will be a hugely valuable tool to be able to offer more vulnerable and isolated people access to the benefits of communal singing. Watch this space!

We are looking forward to releasing our single - a version of This is Me from The Greatest Showman - to tie in with World Homelessness Day in October 2019. There will be an accompanying video as well as a public campaign focused on destigmatising homelessness and highlighting individual stories from our members. We're feeling optimistic that, with the support of our corporate partner, record label and global music services company Kobalt Music, we will generate decent media noise around the campaign, raising awareness of CWNN among a new audience, and change preconceived ideas of homelessness among the public.

Our current strategic plan comes to an end in 2020, so in 2019 we will be consulting with trustees, staff, volunteers, members and other CWNN stakeholders about our plans for the next three years. We are excited to currently be in a period of growth, and look forward to reaching a growing number of people affected by homelessness across more parts of the UK over the coming years.

Our Impact

Every year we ask our members to share with us what the choir means to them and the impact it makes on their lives and we are really proud of the results. In 2018, 109 members took part in our annual survey, and as a result of being a part of CWNN:

96%

of members said they made friends

93%

of members reported increased confidence

91%

of members were motivated to try new things

76%

of members felt their mental health and wellbeing improved

94%

of members learned at least 1 new skills (apart from singing)

74%

of members took up new activities or services outside of choir

79%

of members took up or maintained employment, volunteering or secure housing

93%

of member ambassadors felt being an ambassador was a useful step towards work or volunteering

Our choirs welcome anyone who feels they need a place to belong and our members' experiences are complex and varied:

- **76% have experienced homelessness**
- **41% were rough sleeping or vulnerably housed when they joined choir**
- **25% have experienced addiction**
- **50% have a disability**

"We sing together, we eat together, we can call on each other if we are having a rough time and we laugh and joke together. We may not be blood but we all have singing in our veins and that's what brings us together."

Sophie, Birmingham Choir Member

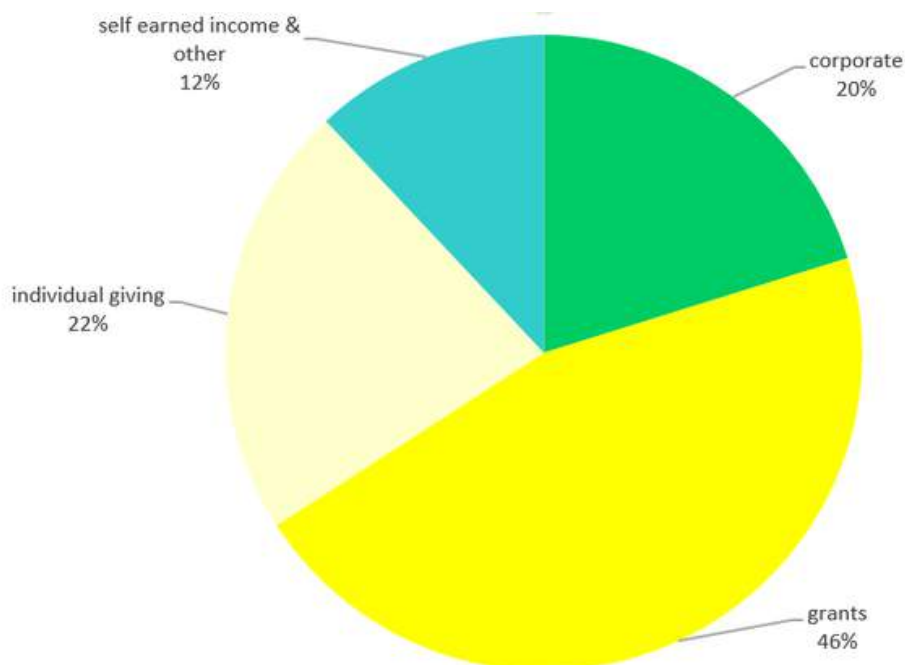
Financial Summary

2018/19

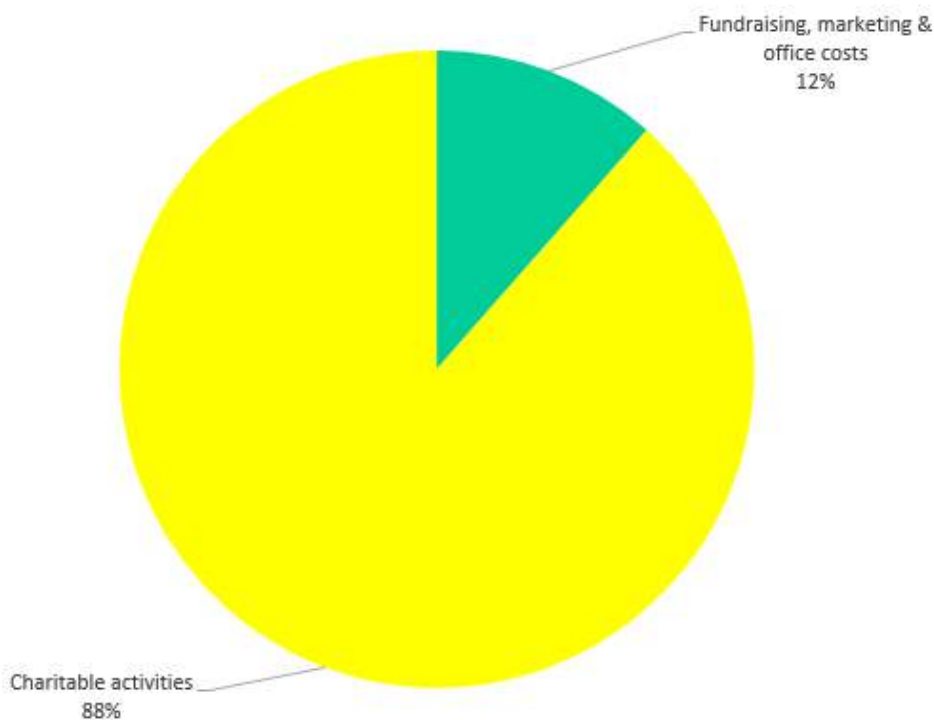


Income: £329,472
Expenditure: £283,780

Income Breakdown 2018/19



Expenditure Breakdown 2018/19



For every £1 we spent on fundraising and administration,
we raised £10 for the charity

Supporters

We are proud and humbled to have received support from some amazing trusts, foundations and businesses throughout the year, without whom we could not continue our work:



Kobalt

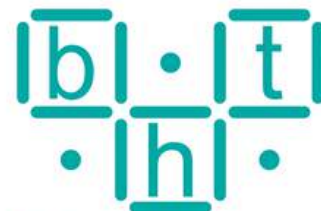


John Ellerman Foundation



Axis Foundation, Chestertons, environmentjob.co.uk, Evan Cornish Foundation, Jackson Lees Foundation, Linklaters LLP, Liverpool Lord Mayor's Fund, Music Publishers Association, Pinch Design, The Regenda Group, South Square Trust

A huge thanks to our choir partners in London and Brighton, who have given us stability and enabled us to grow.



Combating Homelessness
Creating Opportunities
Promoting Change

We are eternally grateful for the support and generosity of the public, so an enormous THANK YOU to all who made donations, ran, cycled, swam and shaved their heads (!) to raise money for us, joined our fan club, came to a gig, signed up to our newsletter, shared our content on Facebook and Twitter, told their friends about us and spread the word about our choirs and the work we do. We couldn't do this without you all.



The Choir with No Name is registered Charity no. 1136173.
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